Shortage of Personnel in the Army

1524. SHRI SHREEGOPAL VYAS:
SHRI BALAVANT *ALIAS* BAL APTE:
SHRI VINAY KATIYAR:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Indian army is falling short of thousands of personnel;

(b) if so, whether it is due to decline in opportunities and prospects;

(c) whether Government are concerned about the situation; and

(d) if so, what steps are being taken to improve the situation?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (d) While there is no shortage of personnel below officer's rank in the Army except minor shortages in medical assistants and some other technical cadres, there are shortages in the ranks of Lt. Col. and below in the officer's cadre.

The main reason for shortage in the Army is non-availbility of sufficient number of suitable candidates meeting Army's laid down criteria for selection. To improve the situation, constant efforts are made to make Army an attractive career. Officers including officers in Short Service Commission (SSC) are now eligible to hold Captain, Major and Lieutenant Colonel rank after 2,6 and 13 years of reackonable service respectively. Government has also issued orders extending the tenure of SSC officers from 10 years to 14 years. Sustained image projection campaign through print and electronic media is also launched.

Delay in Induction of Akash

1525. SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Akash surface-to-air missile was supposed to be inducted into the Air Force by 2003;

(b) whether the same has been inducted; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor and the purpose for which the technology . was developed, if it was not to be utilized?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a)to(c) No, Sir. The development work on Akash missile system has just been completed. The system is ready for User trails after which it will enter the production and induction phase.

Downsizing the Indian Army

†1526. SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA:
SHRI MOTILAL VORA:
SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to downsize the Army, inview of the suggestions of some defence experts;

(b) to what extent it is appropriate to downsize the army, in view of the entry to terrorists from Pakistan and Bangladesh and the military preparedness of China and Pakistan;

(c) whether Government would strengthen the Navy and Air Force, without changing the military set-up, keeping in view the country's requirements; and

(d) by when the final decision in this regard would be taken?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) There is no such proposal under consideration of the Ministry of Defence at present.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) Strengthening of Air Force and Navy by up-gradation of weapon systems and improvements of force structure is an ongoing process.

Resignation by Doctors and Engineers in Defence Forces

1527. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a large number of doctors and engineers in the armed forces want to quit service;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.